

(Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta

Sinhala: Jhāna Nissaya Sutta

The Discourse on Dhyanas (for the Destruction of the Influxes)

The “Dependent on Dhyana” Discourse

A 9.36/4:422-426

Theme: The dhyanas lead to spiritual liberation

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1 The influxes (*āsava*)

1.1 MEANINGS. The word *āsava* is the Pali cognate of either of these two ancient Indian words:

(1) Skt *āsava* (ts), fermented spirit;¹ with cpds such as *gul’āsava*, “spirit from fermented sugar” (VvA 73,14); *pupph’āsava*, “spirit from fermented flowers” (SA 3:303,10); *phal’āsava*, “spirit from fermented fruit” (SA 3:303,11); *madhv’āsava*, “spirit from fermented honey” (VvA 73,11); *surāsava*, “strong spirit” (SA 3:303,12).

(2) Skt *āsrava*, “affliction, pain”; BHS *āsrava*, *āsrava*, “evil (influence), depravity, misery.” In Pali, it can be taken as (a) a figurative usage of the first meaning (“fermented spirit”), because both are kept for a long time.² (b) Meaning “pus, discharge from a sore.”³ (c) Technical term (tt) for the obstacle(s) to the attainment of arhathood. This last meaning is the usage in **the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta** (A 9.36) and in many other suttas.

The word *āsava* comes from *ā-savati*, “it flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints”), corruptions, cankers, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated.⁴

1.2 USAGES. As “mental influxes,” the oldest list is probably the set of 3 influxes—of sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijj’āsava*)⁵—which are essentially the same as the 3 **graspings** (*ti,gaha*) of **craving** (*taṇhā*), **conceit** (*māna*) and **views** (*dīṭṭhī*), on account of which arise, resp, the notions “this is mine,” “this I am,” and “this is my self”), such as in the Vatthūpama Sutta (M 7).⁶

The Abhidhamma and Commentaries give a list of 4 influxes, which is also found in the Nikāyas, that is, the influxes of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*dīṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*).⁷ These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*).⁸

The (Nibbedhika) Pariyāya Sutta (A 6.63), besides listing the three well known influxes, also gives a list of 5 influxes, according to which rebirth they lead to (*gamanīya*) (that is, the hells, the animal womb, the ghost realm, the human world, or the deva world).⁹

¹ V 4:110,15 = KhpA 26,20 (*meraya*) = DA 944,32 (ad D 3:182,22).

² Etym of *āsava*: MA 1:61,16 f = AA 2:183,1 f = ItA 1:114,4 f = Mohv 95,7 = DhsA 18,12 f. Usages: V 5:223,11; D 2:84,5; M 1:55,8; S 5:232,7 410,22; Sn 535; Thī 76; AA 3:167,22.

³ A 1:124,8 = Pug 30,9; AA 2:195,13 = PugA 211,26.

⁴ For translators’ refs, see CPD: *āsava*.

⁵ D 33.1.10(20)/3:216,9; M 9.70/1:55,10, 121.11/3:108,18; MA 1:86,10, 3:41,25 (ad M 1:361,24); A 3.58/1:-165,16, 6.63/3:414,11; S 38.8/4:256,4 = 45.163/5:56,15 = 47.50/189,29; Vbh §914/384,13.

⁶ M 7.18/1:38 = SD 28.12.

⁷ D 16.1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937/373 f.

⁸ V 3:5,27 f; D 16.1.12/2:81,26 = 84,5 & passim, 33.1.11(31)/3:230,10 f; MA 1:62,6 f (ad M 1:6, 22, quoting S 4:256,4); SA 2:65,1 f; AA 2:355 (ad A 1:241,24), 3:79,1 (ad A 2:38,28), 3:321,24 (ad A 3:245,15), 3:395,20 (ad A 3:388,1); ThaA 1:202,23, 214,26; Vbh 373,34 f; Dhs 1:448; Kvu 515,2; Abhs 32,6; Mohv 97,8; Vism 7.59/211,1, 22.56/683,34.

⁹ *Atthi bhikkhave āsavā niraya,gamanīyā, atthi āsava tiracchāna,yoni,gamanīyā, atthi āsavā pittī,visaya,gamanīyā, atthi āsava manussa,loka,gamanīyā,atthi āsavā deva,loka,gamanīyā*, A 6.63.10/3:414,16.

The (Cha) Āsava Sutta (A 6.58) list 6 ways of abandoning (*pahātabba*) the influxes, that is, by restraint (*samvara*), by reflective usage (*paṭisevanā*), by endurance (*adhivāsana*), by avoidance (*parivajjana*), by removal (*vinodana*), and by cultivation (*bhāvanā*). This is the same list as the Sabb'āsava Sutta (M 2) [see following].

The Sabb'āsava Sutta (M 2) lists seven ways of abandoning the influxes, the same as those listed in the (Cha) Āsava Sutta (A 6.58), with “abandoning by cultivation” (*dassana pahatabb'āsava*) as the first.¹⁰ As *āsava* is an important term, most Buddhist encyclopaedias and dictionaries give detailed analyses of it, and they should be consulted.¹¹

2 The progressive abodes (*anupubba vihāra*)

2.1 THE NINE PROGRESSIVE ABODES. The (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta structures itself on the model of the nine progressive abodes (*anupubba vihāra*), that is,¹²

- the 4 form dhyanas (*rūpa jhāna*),
- the 4 formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*),
- the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā, vedayita, nirodha*).

They are profound states of meditative progression, each state more peaceful than the previous one,¹³ culminating in the cessation of perception and feeling, attainable only by non-returners or arhats. As such, they can be said to be the meditative stages to non-return and arhathood. As they are nine profound meditative states, they are sometimes loosely called “the 9 dhyanas” or the nine attainments (*samāpatti*).

Properly speaking, only the first four form dhyanas are called *jhāna*, while the higher four formless bases are called *samāpatti* (attainment). The four formless attainments actually belong to the 4th form dhyana, since they all possess the same two factors (that is, equanimity and samadhi).¹⁴

2.2 FORM AND FORMLESS STATES. While the first three dhyanas take *different forms of bliss* as their object, and the fourth dhyana takes *a sublime state of pure peace* as its object, each of the formless attainments takes *a pure mental object*. These objects are known as “mind-bases” (*āyatana*), so called because the mind in these attainments rests on them. These profoundly still mind-bases are progressively more refined and more empty than the form dhyanas.

The formless attainments are so called because in all the four of them, form (*rūpa*) is perceived as being both infinite and empty, immeasurable and undefined. It is *form*, that is, our ideas of shape and colour, that limits space, but in the formless attainments, we transcend any such perception. Hence, they are called “formless” (*arūpa*).

2.3 PROGRESSIVE CESSATION STILLING AND TRANQUILLIZATION. As each of the nine stages, except for the last, depends on the cessation of the previous one, they are also known as “progressive cessation” (*anupubba nirodha*), as laid out in the Anupubba Nirodha Sutta (A 9.31).¹⁵ The “cessation” (*nirodha*) here occurs by way of emerging from the meditative and reviewing a key feature of that state as being “gross” (*oḷārika*), and so we progress onto the following stage.

The Raho,gata Sutta (S 36.11) first introduces the nine progressive abodes by way of *cessation* (*nirodha*), followed by the same set of abodes by way of “stilling” (*vūpasama*), and then by way of *five* stages of “tranquillization” (*passaddhi*). This last set of abodes comprises only the four form dhyanas and the attainment of cessation.¹⁶ Obviously, this tranquillization passage shows that cessation can be attained through the form dhyanas but *without* any of the formless attainments.

¹⁰ M 2/1:6-12 = SD 30.3.

¹¹ See *āsava* in BDict, PED, CPD (etym & usages), DPL, Ency Bsm. See also Sabb'āsava S (M 2/1:6-12) @ SD 30.3, esp for the connection btw *āsava* and *samyojana* (fettors).

¹² D 33.3.2(5)/3:265, 34.2.2(1)/3:290; A 9.33/4:410-414; see Tevijja S (D 13) @ SD 1.8 Intro (2.2) (3) n.

¹³ See **Santatara S** (It 3.3.4/61 f) = SD 24.20.

¹⁴ On the formless attainments, see **The body in Buddhism** = SD 29.6a (5.2.3).

¹⁵ A 9.31/4:409 = D 33.3.2(6)/3:266 = SD 33.6(3.2.3).

¹⁶ The 5-stage tranquillization (*passaddhi*) is listed in (**Vedanā**) **Ānanda S 1** (S 36.15/4:119-221) = (**Vedanā**) **Sambahula Bhikkhū** (S 36.17/4:222).

3 Calm as the basis for insight

3.1 MEDITATIVE STRATEGIES FOR AWAKENING. **The (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta** (A 9.36) describes the attainment of arhathood or non-return through meditation that applies calm (*samatha*) as a basis for insight (*vipassanā*). This is one of the four approaches or strategies to meditation as laid out by Ānanda in **the (Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā Sutta** (A 4.170), makes a very clear reference to the various vehicles for mental cultivation for the attaining of arhathood, as follows:

- (1) Insight preceded by calm.¹⁷ When the path arises in him, he pursues it, so that the mental fetters¹⁸ are abandoned and the latent tendencies¹⁹ are destroyed.
- (2) Calm preceded by insight.²⁰ When the path arises in him, he pursues it, so that the mental fetters are abandoned and the latent tendencies are destroyed.
- (3) Calm and insight coupled together.²¹ When the path arises in him, he pursues it, so that the mental fetters are abandoned and the latent tendencies are destroyed.
- (4) A monk's mind is seized by agitation caused by higher states of mind,²² but there comes a time when his mind becomes internally steadied, composed, unified and concentrated. Then the

¹⁷ *Samatha, pubb'āṅgamaṇi vipassanaṇi*. This refers to the calm practitioner (*samatha, yānika*), ie one who first cultivates access concentration (*upacāra, samādhī*), the dhyanas or the formless attainments and then takes up insight (*vipassanā*) meditation. "Access concentration" is the concentration gained just before attaining dhyana. See MA 1:112.

¹⁸ Mental fetters, see §7 n above.

¹⁹ Latent tendencies (*anusayā*), alt trs "underlying tendencies," "latent dispositions." There are 7 of them: (1) sensual desire (*kāma-rāga*); (2) aversion (*paṭigha*); (3) wrong view (*diṭṭhi*); (4) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*); (5) conceit (*māna*); (6) desire for existence (*bhava-rāga*); (7) ignorance (*avijjā*). They are also listed in Saṅgīti S (D 33.2.3-(12)/3:254, 282), Cha, chakka S (M 148.28/3:285), Anusaya S (A 7.11 & 12/4:8 f) and Vibhaṅga (Vbh 383). They are deeply embedded in one's mind through past habitual acts and can only be uprooted on attaining the Path. Wrong view and spiritual doubt are eliminated at stream-winning; sensual desire and aversion, at non-return; conceit, attachment to existence and ignorance, only at arhathood. See Abhs 7.9: "The latent dispositions (*anusayā*) are defilements which 'lie along with' (*anusenti*) the mental process to which they belong, rising to the surface as obsessions whenever they meet with suitable conditions. The term 'latent dispositions' highlights the fact that the defilements are liable to arise so long as they have not been eradicated by the supramundane paths. Though all defilements are, in a sense, *anusayas*, the seven mentioned here are the most prominent." (Abhs:B 268). See also Abhs:SR 172. The first 3 latent tendencies are mentioned in Sall'atthana S (S 36.6/4:207-210) in SD 5.5 or "Early Buddhist Sutras" (2004 ch 2). See **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18) = SD 16.3 Introd (5).

²⁰ *Vipassanā, pubb'āṅgamaṇi samathanī*. Here the practitioner first enters access concentration (*upacāra, samādhī*) or full concentration (*appanā, samādhī*), and then takes up insight by regarding those states as impermanent, etc (MA 1:108 f). "This refers to one who by his nature first attains to insight and then, based on insight, produces concentration" (AA 3:143), ie the insight practitioner (*vipassanā, yānika*). See MA 1:112.

²¹ *Samatha, vipassanā, yuganaddhanī*. Here, one enters the first dhyana and emerging from it, one applies insight to that experience, ie one sees the 5 aggregates within the dhyana (form, feeling, perceptions, formations, consciousness) as impermanent, subject to suffering and not self. Then one enters the 2nd dhyana, emerges and applies insight to it. One applies the twofold reflection to the other dhyanas as well in the same manner until the path of stream-entry, or higher, is realized.

²² *Dhamm'uddhacca, viggahitaṇi mānasāni hoti*. Comy says that the "agitation" (*uddhacca*) here refers to a reaction of the 10 "impurities of insight" (*vipassanā 'nupakkilesa*) when they are wrongly taken as indicating path-attainment (AA 3:143). That is, he is distracted by any of these 10 impurities: evil conduct of body, speech and mind; sensual thoughts, thoughts of ill will, violent thoughts; thoughts about relatives, home country and reputation; thoughts about higher mental states (*dhamma, vitakka*) (Jāta, rūpa S, A 3.100.1-10/1:253-256). The Visuddhi, -magga uses *dhamma, vitakka* ("thoughts about higher states") to refer to the same 10 impurities (Vism 20.105-128/633-638). Bodhi: "It is plausible, however, that the 'agitation caused by higher states of mind' is mental distress brought on by eagerness to instantaneous enlightenment experience" (A:ÑB 294 n69). See the story of Bāhiya Dārucīriya in Bāhiya S (U 1.10/6-9) & also the story of Anuruddha in (Anuruddha) Upakkilesa S (M 128/3:152-162).

path arises in him, and while he does so, the fetters are abandoned and the latent tendencies are destroyed. (A 4.170/2:156 f) = SD 41.5

It should be noted that the teacher here is not the Buddha, but Ānanda, and the locale of teachings is not the heart of the central Gangetic plain (in such places as Sāvattihī) but near Kosambī, in the far west of the Buddhist holy land. Clearly, this teaching was given quite late in the Buddha's life, or even soon after his parinirvana.²³

3.2 CALM AS THE BASIS FOR INSIGHT. The (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta (A 9.36) describes the attainment of arhathood or non-return through meditation that applies calm as a basis for insight. More technically, this is described as “insight preceded by calm” (*samatha, pubb'arigama vipassana*). Here, “calm” (*samatha*) refers to dhyana (*jhāna*), and “insight” (*vipassanā*) is the contemplation of our experiences as being impermanent, suffering and not self (especially as the first—which the Commentary calls “great insight-wisdom” (*balava, vipassanā, paññā*, AA 4:195).

Here, the Buddha explains that the meditator first cultivates insight using dhyana as the basis for contemplation. The meditator analyzes his experiences in terms of the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness).²⁴ Then he goes on to regard the aggregates in eleven ways, that is, “as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.”²⁵

These eleven qualities are an elaboration of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and not-self, as follows:

- Impermanence: impermanent, breaking up;
- Suffering: suffering, disease, tumour, barb, calamity, affliction;
- Not-self: alien, empty, not-self.

Apparently, we need not take these eleven expressions, most of which are figurative, do not refer to separate acts, but rather are examples of *how* to contemplate the three characteristics.

3.3 TURNING TO THE DEATH-FREE ELEMENT. The high-point of the meditation instructions of the Sutta is formulated thus:

He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime,²⁶ that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”²⁷

²³ The fact that the vocative, *āvuso*, is used, suggests that it refers to a time when the Buddha is still living. See the Buddha's injunction in **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), “Ānanda, now the monks address one another as ‘Āvuso’ [friend], but after my passing, they should not address one another so. Ānanda, the more junior monks should be addressed by the more senior monks by name, or by clan [gotra] or as ‘Āvuso.’ The more senior monks should be addressed by the more junior monks as ‘Bhante’ [Bhante] or as ‘Āyasmā’ [Venerable].” (D 16.6.2/2:154) = SD 9. However, this Sutta was compiled sometime after the Buddha's passing. Furthermore, it is a composite work, and we are not certain when this particular section was inserted. The point is that the monastics prob were still using *āvuso* even after the Buddha's time. However, it is likely that Ānanda, on receiving such an instruction, would have faithfully executed it. The fact that the vocative, *āvuso*, is used, suggests that it refers to a time when the Buddha is still living. See the Buddha's injunction in **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), “Ānanda, now the monks address one another as ‘Āvuso’ [friend], but after my passing, they should not address one another so. Ānanda, the more junior monks should be addressed by the more senior monks by name, or by clan [gotra] or as ‘Āvuso.’ The more senior monks should be addressed by the more junior monks as ‘Bhante’ [Bhante] or as ‘Āyasmā’ [Venerable].” (D 16.6.2/2:154) = SD 9. See (**Yuganaddha**) **Paṭipadā S** (A 4.170/2:156 f) = SD 41.5.

²⁴ On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

²⁵ *Aniccato dukkhato rogato gandato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato*: see §2b n.

²⁶ *Paṇṇātam*, as at M 2:235, 263; A 4:423, 5:8, 110, 320, 322, 354 ff.

[§§2c, 4c, 6c, 8c, 10c, 12c, 14c, 15c]

The Commentary explains that “he turns his mind away” (*cittam paṭivāpeti*) from the five aggregates included in the dhyana, which he has seen to be marked with the three characteristics (of impermanence, suffering, not-self) (MA 3:146). He goes on to regard the dhyana or attainment, thus: “This is peaceful... nirvana.”

This shift in mental focus marks the transition from a high level of insight to the supramundane path (that is, the path of sainthood). In other words, when the meditator has fully seen the true nature of the five aggregates, his mind turn away from all conditioned phenomena and focusses on nirvana, “the death-free element” (*amata dhātu*). As this is the only real escape (*nissaraṇa*) there is from conditioned existence, he attains liberation.

He thus attains arhathood. However, if some subtle clinging to that experience, or an enjoyment of it, still remains, he attains non-return, and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (Suddh’āvāsa), attaining liberation in due course.²⁸

3.4 THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. The Sutta gives the same parable of the archer seven times, without elaborating on it, thus:

Suppose, bhikkhus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body.²⁹

[§§3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15a]

However, any meditator will be able to relate to how an archer aims his arrow at his target. He needs a great sense of mental focus. The archer first assumes a proper and comfortable posture, holding his bow and arrow in a relaxed yet firm manner. He does not look at the whole target, but only the bull’s eye, the heart of his target. He *feels* his target so that he is one with the target, as it were.³⁰ Then he gently lets go of the arrow.

Similarly, when we meditate, we first assume a proper and relaxed posture. Then, we fully focus the mind on the meditation object (the breath, lovingkindness, etc), at first, maybe, with some mental verbalization (like counting the breaths, or using short helpful prompts, “May I be well”). When we feel more focussed, we “feel” the meditation object, that is, let neither words nor thoughts intrude. We *know* the breath is coming in, we *know* the breath is going out, or we *feel* the joy of lovingkindness or unconditional acceptance. And we keep doing this until we forget, as it were, everything else, especially our body. When the mind is fully focussed, we feel a profound sense of inner joy.

I have not come across anyone else explaining the rest of the parable, so I will hazard some pertinent comments, thus:

- “The straw man” (*tiṇa, purisa, rūpaka*) clearly refers to our being nothing more than a “hollow man,” empty events comprising form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. When we realize this, we become its opposite, that is, the “true individual” (*sappurisa*)³¹
- “A pile of clay” (*mattikā, puñja*): we are a pile of five aggregates, of which form (*rūpa*), our physical structure, is made up of the four elements (earth, water, fire and wind).³²

²⁷ *Etam santam etam paṇitam yad idam sabba, saṅkhāra, samatho sabbūpadhi, paṇinissaggo taṇha-k, khayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan ti*, as at M 1:136.

²⁸ See (**Bojjhaṅga**) **Sīla S** (S 46.3/5:69) & SD 10.15 Intro (7). See also (**Nānā, karaṇa**) **Mettā S 2** (A 4.126/2:-130) = SD 33.10.

²⁹ *Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, issāso vā issās’antevāsī vā tiṇa, purisa, rūpake vā mattikā, puñje vā yoggaṃ karitvā, so aparena samayena dūre, pātī ca hoti akkhaṇa, vedhī ca mahato ca kāyassa padāletā.*

³⁰ On being one with the meditation object, see **The Buddha discovers dhyana** = SD 33.1b (6.3).

³¹ See **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22.6/1:132 = SD 3.13 n (“hollow man”)); **Sappurisa S** (M 113) = SD 23.7 Intro (3.2).

³² See **Khandha 12 Rupa** = SD SD 17.2a.

- “A master of the long-shot” (*dūre, pāṭi*). Here the arrow is free from the archer’s hands, and flies its way on its own momentum towards its target some distance away. This is when the meditator has overcome all unwholesome mental states and hindrances, and the mental fetters are abandoned. Alternatively, on a higher level, he has attained dhyana, and remains there as long as necessary, until he fully *masters* it before proceeding further.³³
- “Who hits the target” (*akkhaṇa, vedhī*), that is, the meditator attains a dhyana or an attainment. Alternatively, on a higher level, he gains arhathood or non-return.
- “Piercing even a large body” (*mahato ca kāyassa padāletā*). There is an allusion (see eg the Sati-**paṭṭhāna** Sutta, M 10)³⁴ to the state of a meditator who has attained a “great mind,” *mahaggata citta*, that is, made great or “exalted” because all the mental hindrances have been overcome, thus attaining a dhyana or a formless attainment. In such meditations as the four divine abodes (including lovingkindness cultivation) and the “totality” (*kaṣiṇa*) meditations, this refers to the ability to pervade a certain area with our meditation object, be this the area around the root of a tree, the area of a whole village, or even the area of the whole earth (M 3:146).³⁵ In other words, we have “broken the barrier,” so that the mind is boundless.³⁶ This is also the natural state of the awakened mind.

3.5 THE LAST TWO STAGES. While we may use insight knowledge to examine the form dhyanas and the first three formless attainments, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n’eva, saññā, nā-saññāyatana*) and the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā, vedayita, nirodha*) are simply too subtle for any kind of examination, as they are without any observable characteristic. As such, these two states cannot be directly be taken as mental objects for investigation with insight.

The cessation of perception and feeling, fully described in the Visuddhi, magga,³⁷ an anomalous spiritual state, is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight, where all mental states temporarily shut down.³⁸ On emerging from cessation, the meditator experiences the fruit of his respective attainment, that is, there arises the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi, phala*) in the non-returner, and the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta, phala*) in the arhat.³⁹

However, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is a very effective purifier of the mind. Emerging from this state, the meditator reviews that even this state is “gross” (*oḷarika*), and progresses on to liberation.⁴⁰ The attainment of cessation, however, is too subtle for any kind of investigation, as it what we might today be described as a “suspended state of animation.” Moreover, only arhats and non-returners are capable of attaining and dwelling in this state.⁴¹

3.6 THE CLOSING ADMONITION. This closing admonition of the (Āsava-k, khaya) Jhāna Sutta [S17] should not be misinterpreted as that a meditator should declare his meditative *attainment*, but rather to inspire and guide others with *the possibility of attaining such states*. No Vinaya-abiding monk would declare his attainments.

The **Pārajika rule 4** clearly prohibits a monk from falsely claiming to any superhuman state (*uttari-manussa dhamma*), which includes meditative attainments, under the pain of falling or “defeat” from

³³ Clearly, there is an allusion to the fivefold mastery (*pañca vasī*): see **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.1 (8.6.2).

³⁴ M 10.34(5)/1:59 = SD 13.3.

³⁵ The fact that “liberation of the mind that has become great” (*mahaggatā ceto, vimutti*) is distinguished from “boundless liberation of the mind” (*mahaggata citta*) suggests that its meditative pervasion would involve some other meditation object, which according to the commentarial explanation is the development of dhyana based on a *kaṣiṇa* (totality) object. (MA 4:200). See **Catuttha Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.4) @ SD 24.14 Intro (4).

³⁶ Vism 9.40; cf KhpA 248.

³⁷ Vism 23.16-52/702-709.

³⁸ Vism 23.43/707 f.

³⁹ Vism 23.49/708; PmA 1:41, 321.

⁴⁰ See (**Pañcāla, caṇḍa**) **Sambādha S** (A 9.42.10/4:451) = SD 33.2.

⁴¹ On cessation, see **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.25/1:296 & SD 30.2 Intro (3.2); **Cūla Vedalla S** M 44.16-21/1:301 f = SD 40a.9.

monkhood itself.⁴² Even if the claim is true, according to Pācittiya rule 8, but made to one who is unordained, that is, a novice or lay person, the monk commits an offence entailing expiation.⁴³

Similarly, judicious lay meditators and teachers, too, would not make any claim of high attainments, whether they are true or not. If the claim is false, they break the fourth precept. If the claim is true, it might arouse conceit (*māna*) in their followers. The purpose of such instructions is to discourage guru worship, and to encourage each and every student to endeavour to attain such meditative states for themselves, or at least experience some inner stillness.

4 Related suttas

The topic of how dhyana can expedite awakening and salvation is dealt with in numerous discourses. Here we shall list a few key discourses that should be studied together with the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta. The **(Nānā,karaṇa) Puggala Sutta 2** (A 4.124) relates how the practice of the form dhyanas⁴⁴ can lead to non-return.⁴⁵ The Sutta describes how, after attaining to any of the four form dhyanas, we could progress on to attain non-return by contemplating the five aggregates in the eleven reflections mentioned in the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta, that is, “as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.”⁴⁶ [3.2].

The **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 64), on the other hand, lists only the first seven of the progressive abodes, omitting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and the attainment of cessation. It also has the eleven reflections on the three characteristics [3.2].⁴⁷

The **Anupada Sutta** (M 111), which is Sāriputta’s stage-by-stage personal account of his own awakening, lists all the stages of the progressive abodes, as in the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta, that is, the four form dhyanas, the four formless attainments and the attainment of cessation.⁴⁸ However, it omits the eleven reflections.

A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta is found in the **Aṭṭhaka,nagara Sutta** (M 52). There, however, the “deliverance of mind” through the four divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*) (M 52.4-11) replaces the usual form dhyanas, followed by the 3 formless attainments (M 52.12-14).⁴⁹

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⁴² Pār 4 = V 3:109,21-27.

⁴³ Pāc 8 = V 4:25,22 f. A *pācittiya* rule when broken causes the falling away of what is wholesome (*kusala*). In other words, it would lead to the arising of unwholesome states. For example, if a monk claims that he has some superhuman state, it would encourage some kind of conceit (*māna*, measuring) in the unordained, esp the unwise laity. For example, they might pride in the claim that their teacher is an “arhat,” or they would blindly believe or follow what the monk instructs, rightly or wrongly.

⁴⁴ On *dhyana* (*jhāna*), see **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.1(8) & **Nimitta** = SD 19.7.

⁴⁵ A 4.124/2:128) = SD 23.8b.

⁴⁶ *Aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato*: see §2b n.

⁴⁷ M 64.9-15/1:435-437 = SD 21.10

⁴⁸ M 111/3:25-29 = SD 56.4.

⁴⁹ M 52/1:349-353 = SD 41.2.

The Discourse on Dhyanas (for the Destruction of the Influxes)

A 9.36/4:422-426

Summary

1 The destruction of the influxes, ⁵⁰ bhikshus, is dependent on	the first dhyana, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	the second dhyana, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	the third dhyana, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	the fourth dhyana, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	the base of boundless space, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	the base of boundless consciousness, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	the base of nothingness, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, I say.
The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on	cessation of perception and feeling, I say.

THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES (*nava anupubba vihāra*)⁵¹

Overcoming the 5 lower fetters⁵² via dhyana⁵³

2a (1) THE 1ST DHYANA. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the first dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, monks, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, attains and dwells in the first dhyana, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and happiness born of solitude.⁵⁴

2b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,⁵⁵

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, [423] as empty, as not self.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ *Āsava-k,khaya*, ie the attainment of arhathood (*arahatta*) (AA 4:195).

⁵¹ See (*Āsava-k,khaya*) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36/4:422-426) = SD 33.8 Intro (2).

⁵² The 10 fetters (*dasa samyojana*) are: (1) self-identity view (*sakkāya,ditthi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma,rāga*), (5) aversion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*nīpa,rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (or remorse) (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*kāma,rāga*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*ud-dhambhāgiya*). The abandonment of the lower 5 fetters makes one a non-returner (*opapātika* or *anāgāmi*) (see **Ānā-pānasati S**, M 118.10 = 7.13).

⁵³ A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as seen here is found in a number of other suttas: see Intro (4).

⁵⁴ “Born of solitude,” *viveka,ja*; ie it is the result of abandoning the hindrances: on the 3 kinds of solitude, see The body in Buddhism, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see The Layman and dhyana = SD 8.5.

⁵⁵ These are the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*): see SD 17.

⁵⁶ “Impermanent...not self,” *aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇdato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suñ-ñāto anattato*: as at M 1:435, 500; A 4:422 f; cf A 2:128; Miln 418. Comy says that the marks of suffering are six-fold (*dukkhato rogato gaṇdato sallato aghato ābādhato*), the impermanent twofold (*aniccato palokato*), the not-self

2c He turns his mind away⁵⁷ from these states.⁵⁸

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element,⁵⁹ thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime,⁶⁰ that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”⁶¹

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

2d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,⁶² then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (*opapātika*) (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.⁶³

3a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,⁶⁴

even so, bhikshus, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, attains and dwells in the first dhyana, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and happiness born of solitude.

3b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

3c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

threefold (*parato suññato anattato*) (MA 3:146). This refrain (and the rest) shows the attainment of calm (*samatha*), leading to the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*), or “insight preceded by calm” (*samatha, pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*), ie, on emerging from dhyana, one contemplates on it as an object of insight, reflecting it as having arisen through conditions, esp volition: see **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 649-16/1:435-437) = SD 21.10; see also **Aṭṭhaka, nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350) = SD 41.2, where Comy says that this is *samatha, pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*; see (Yuganaddha) **Paṭipadā S** (A 4.170/2:157) = SD 41.5. See Intro (3.2).

⁵⁷ “Turn...away,” Be Ce Ee WT *paṭivāpeti*, Se *paṭiṭṭhāpeti* throughout. *Pativāpeti* der from √VAP, “to shear or sow” (M 1:435 = A 4.423; DhsA 407). Other vll: *paṭipādeti*, *paṭiḷapeti* (MA), *paṭicāreti*, *paṭivāreti* (SHB, but inconsistent). See A:H 4:225 n, where EM Hare suggests reading *paṭinivatteti*, “to cause to turn away, to avert,” see McDonnell’s Skt Dict, sv √VRT. See also SED which gives *pratinivartayati*, sv *parti-ni-√VRT*. One reason for this bewildering list of variant readings is prob that the reciters or redactors (after the Buddha’s time) were themselves not sure of the appropriate action at this point in the meditation. This problem, unfortunately, is even more rampant today.

⁵⁸ Comy: “He turns his mind away” (*cittam paṭivāpeti*) from the 5 aggregates included in the dhyana, which he has seen to be marked with the 3 characteristics (of impermanence, suffering, not-self) (MA 3:146). He goes on to regard the dhyana or attainment, thus: “This is peaceful...nirvana” (see below). See Intro (3.3).

⁵⁹ *So tehi dhammehi cittam paṭivāpetvā [paṭinivattetvā] amatāya dhātuyā cittam upasamharati.*

⁶⁰ *Pañitam*, as at M 2:235, 263; A 4:423, 5:8, 110, 320, 322, 354 ff.

⁶¹ *Etam santam etam pañitam yad idam sabba, saṅkhāra, samatho sabbūpadhi, paṭinissaggo taṇha-k, khayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan ti*, as at M 1:136. See also V 1:5; D 2:36; S 1:136; A 5:8.

⁶² “Desire...delight in dharmas” (*dhamma, rāga dhamma, nandī*), as at **Aṭṭhaka, nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (*chanda-rāga*), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). *Dhamma* here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

⁶³ **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 65) (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (*anupubba vihāra*) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.-10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

⁶⁴ *Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, issāso vā issās’antevāsī vā tiṇa, purisa, rūpake vā mattikā, puñje vā yoggam karitvā, so aparena samayena dūre, pātī ca hoti akkhaṇa, vedhī ca mahato ca kāyassa padāletā.*

3d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,⁶⁵ then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world. [424]

3e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the first dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

4a (2) THE 2ND DHYANA. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the second dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, attains and dwells in the second dhyana, free from initial application and sustained application,⁶⁶ with zest and happiness born of concentration.⁶⁷

4b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

4c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

4d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.⁶⁸

5a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, attains and dwells in the second dhyana, free from initial application and sustained application,⁶⁹ with zest and happiness born of concentration.

5b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

5c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

⁶⁵ “Desire...delight in dharmas” (*dhamma,rāga dhamma,nandī*), as at **Aṭṭhaka,nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (*chanda-rāga*), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). *Dhamma* here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

⁶⁶ On the repetition of this quality, see also *Pariyāyena Nippariyāyena* = SD 68.2.

⁶⁷ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṅhī,bhāva*) because within it initial application and sustained application (thinking and discursion, *vitakka,vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vaci,saiṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In Ariya,pariyesanā S (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate). See **Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.2/4:263 f) = SD 24.12.

⁶⁸ **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (*anupubba vihāra*) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

⁶⁹ On the repetition of this quality, see also *Pariyāyena Nippariyāyena* = SD 68.2.

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

5d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

5e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the second dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

6a (3) THE 3RD DHYANA. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the third dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in the third dhyana, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’ He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest.

6b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

6c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

6d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.⁷⁰

7a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, with the fading away of zest, dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in the third dhyana, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’ He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest.

7b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

7c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

7d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

⁷⁰ **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (*anupubba vihāra*) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

7e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the third dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

8a (4) THE 4TH DHYANA. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the fourth dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, with the abandoning of joy and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure—he attains and dwells in the fourth dhyana, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

8b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

8c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

8d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.⁷¹

9a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, with the abandoning of joy and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure—attains and dwells in the fourth dhyana, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

9b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

9c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

9d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world. [425]

9e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the fourth dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

Overcoming the 5 lower fetters via the attainments⁷²

10a (5) THE BASE OF INFINITE SPACE. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless space,⁷³ I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

⁷¹ **Mahā Mālunḱyā,putta S** (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (*anupubba vihāra*) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

⁷² On the formless attainments, see **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1) = SD 24.11 Intro (5).

⁷³ **Ākāśānañc’āyatana** (BHSD *ākāśānanty’āyatana*), resolved as *ākāsa* + *anañca* + *āyatana*. The word *ākāsa* means “sky, space,” but here clearly means *space*. The word *anañca* (BHSD *anantya*), “infinity, boundlessness,” is

Here, bhikshus, a monk, a monk, having completely transcended perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, through non-attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating, “Infinite space,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite space.⁷⁴

10b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

10c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

10d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.⁷⁵

11a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, having completely transcended perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, through non-attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating, “Infinite space,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite space.

11b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

11c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

11d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

11e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless space, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

12a (6) THE BASE OF INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless consciousness,⁷⁶ I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said? [426]

the abstract noun of the adjective *ananta*, “infinite, without end, boundless.” And *āyatana* means “mind-base, (mental) sphere,” that is, a mental state in meditation. See A Wynne, *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, London, 2007: 21 f, 29.

⁷⁴ *Sabbaso rūpa,saññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭigha,saññānaṃ atthaṅgamā nānatta,saññānaṃ amanasikārā ananto ākāso ti ākāsaṇaṅc’āyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

⁷⁵ **Mahā Mālunkya,putta S** (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (*anupubba vihāra*) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

⁷⁶ *Viññāṇaṅc’āyatana* is a haplogy (syllable loss) of the grammatical form *viññāṇaṇaṅc’āyatana*, ie, *viññāṇa* (“consciousness”) + *anañca* (“infinity”) + *āyatana* (“mind-base, sphere”). The word *ananta* (BHSD *anantya*), “infinity, boundlessness,” is the abstract noun of the adjective *ananta*, “infinite, without end, boundless.” See W Geiger,

Here, bhikshus, a monk, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite space, contemplating, “Infinite consciousness,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite consciousness.⁷⁷

12b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

12c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

12d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.⁷⁸

13a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite space, contemplating, “Infinite consciousness,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite consciousness.

13b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

13c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element,⁷⁹ thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

13d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,⁸⁰ then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

13e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless space, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

14a (7) THE BASE OF NOTHINGNESS. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of nothingness,⁸¹ I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said? [426]

Pali Grammar (1994, 2000)§65.2. See also Alexander Wynne, *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, London, 2007: 27.

⁷⁷ *Sabbaso ākāśānañc’āyatanam samatikkama anantam viññāṇan ti viññāṇañcāyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

⁷⁸ **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (*anupubba vihāra*) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

⁷⁹ *So tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpetvā amatāya dhātuyā cittaṃ upasamharati.*

⁸⁰ “Desire...delight in dharmas” (*dhamma,rāga dhamma,nandī*), as at **Aṭṭhaka,nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (*chanda-rāga*), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). *Dhamma* here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

⁸¹ *Ākiñcaññ’āyatana = ākiñcañña [ākiñcana]+ āyatana; ākiñcana is der fr a + √KIC (Dhātup 42: maddane; cf MA 2:354,29; SA 3:99,8).*

Here, bhikshus, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” attains and dwells in the base of nothingness.⁸²

14b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

14c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

14d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.⁸³

15a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” attains and dwells in the base of nothingness.

15b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

15c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

15d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

16a “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of nothingness, I say,” thus it is said. And it was in this connection that this was said.

16b Thus, indeed, bhikshus, to the extent there is attainment with perception, to that extent there is the penetration into true knowledge.⁸⁴

17 (8) THE BASE OF NEITHER-PERCEPTION-NOR-NON-PERCEPTION & CESSATION. Bhikshus, as regards these two bases—the base of the attainment neither-perception-nor-non-perception⁸⁵ and the cessation of perception and feeling⁸⁶—those monks who are meditators, skilled in the attainments and

⁸² *Sabbaso viññāṇaṅc’āyatanam samatikkamma n’atthi kiñcī ti ākiñcaññ’āyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

⁸³ **Mahā Mālūṅkyā,putta S** (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (*anupubba vihāra*) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

⁸⁴ *Iti kho, bhikkhave, yāvatā saññā,samāpatti tāvatā aññā,paṭivedho.*

⁸⁵ *N’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana* (BHSD *naiva,samjñā,nāsamjñāyatana*), resolved as *na* (“not”) + *eva* (emphasis) + *samjñā* (“perception, consciousness”) + *na* (“not”) + *asamjñā* (“non-perception, nonconsciousness”) + *āyatana* (mind-base, base”). See A Wynne, *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, London, 2007: 21 f, 29.

⁸⁶ *Saññā,vedayita,nirodha*. See Sappurisa S (M 113) = SD 23.7 Intro (2).

skilled in emerging from the attainments, and having attained them and having emerged from them, should rightly point them out [declare them], I say.”⁸⁷

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⁸⁷ *Yāni ca kho imāni, bhikkhave, nissāya dve āyatanāni—n’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana,samāpatti ca saññā,-vedayita,nirodho ca, jhāyī h’ete, bhikkhave, samāpatti,kusalehi samāpatti,vuṭṭhāna,kusalehi samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhahitvā sammā akkhātabbānīti vadāmi ti.* See Intro (3.6).